

Fitting Your Skates

A good fit is essential for comfort and performance. The following guidelines will help you select the correct boot size.

Finding the Best Fit!

Do not buy skates that are too large. While seated, slide the skate on your foot and lightly kick your heel down into the back of the boot. New skates should feel snug in the heel, the arch and the ball areas to provide the best support for the foot. Your toes should be able to wiggle freely, but not slide side to side.

To lace your boot, start with the first eyelet in the throat area. Be sure to maintain snug, even tension on all eyelets up to the instep. Put a couple of cross twists in the laces, and finish with medium pressure on the lace to the top of the boot. This method will keep your foot held firmly in your boot; yet allow maximum flexibility of the ankle joint.

After the skate is completely laced, stand up and allow your body weight to rest evenly over your entire foot. Because the foot has a tendency to expand when pressure is applied, it is important to remember that skates may feel tighter now than when your foot was in a more relaxed position.

Bend your knees; try to lift your heel out of the back cup of the boot. There should be very little movement. Your toes should brush the boot's front sides with light pressure.

This procedure will help you achieve the proper fit of your new boots.

Breaking in Skates

Breaking in new boots is a very tedious process. However, it is important that you break your boots in correctly. Breaking in your skates improperly can cause blisters and other injuries.

Lace and unlace your boots three to four times before skating.

When skating in new boots be sure to wear thin socks or tights. Boots are made to form to your foot. If you wear thick socks, the boot will mold to your sock. This will make your boots uncomfortable in the future.

Take your time. Breaking in skates isn't something that should be done in one day.

During the first day on the ice, take your time. Do Moves in the Field, edges and extensions. Lace and unlace your skates a few times while you are skating.

During your second session on the ice, continue to work on edges and field moves; and if your skates feel good, then try some spins. Lace and unlace your skates several times during the session.

During your third session, start trying small jumps. Lace and unlace your skates during the session.

By the fourth or fifth session you should be able to perform most skills in your new skates.

Taking Care of Your Skates

Skate maintenance is very important for skaters. Keeping your skates in good condition will pay off in the long run. You will extend the life of your skates, which means that you do not have to buy new skates quite as often. Here are some guidelines for new skaters and parents. Experienced skaters will already do these things, some might even have a few tricks of their own.

Protecting Your Skates

- Do not walk off ice without blade guards.
- Dry your blades after you have finished skating.
- Put terry cloth covers on your blades to protect them and absorb any condensation.
- Do not leave plastic guards on your blades. The dampness will remain in the guards causing your blades to corrode and rust.
- Have your blades sharpened regularly by an expert sharpener. This should be done about 4-6 weeks.
- Keep a screwdriver in your skate bag so you can tighten your screws when needed.
- Have your soles waterproofed about every other month.
- Have your blades mounted by a professional.